

RHINELANDER'S CONDITION.

WITNESSES WHO THINK HIM INSANE.

THREE DOCTORS, A STABLE-KEEPER AND A LAWYER TESTIFY—THE PRISONER'S ILLUSIONS.

The commission appointed to inquire into the mental condition of Wm. C. Rhinelander, met at noon yesterday, in the judges' chambers of the Court of General Sessions. The room was crowded and access to it was difficult. Of five witnesses examined three were medical men. Rhinelander half reclined, apparently at ease, in an easy chair behind his counsel, occasionally bursting into a hearty laugh at the sallies across the other side. He seemed composed. A little diversion, which threatened to become unpleasant, occurred as the session opened, ex-Judge Curtis, Rhinelander's counsel, complaining that a physician, sent in his interest, had been denied admission to the cell. Assistant Dist-Attorney Dr. Ford could assure Judge Curtis that no such orders had been given by him. At that moment Frederick K. Clark, Mr. Curtis's associate, came in with the announcement that a physician had been allowed to examine Rhinelander in his cell in the morning.

Dr. John H. Douglass, the first witness, testified that he had known Rhinelander since 1881; that he well acquainted with his mental physical condition and did not think him sane. This opinion he formed from an examination which he made in the Tombs. Rhinelander appeared to have the steady, cross-examined by ex-Judge Curtis. Dr. Douglass said that he had never before testified in an insanity case. He could not define the terms "mania," "hallucination" and "illusion."

Judge Curtis—Don't you know that near-sighted people who are delirious of their glasses, as Mr. Rhinelander was when you examined him, have a nervous movement of the eyes?

Dr. Douglass—Yes, but it is different from that seen in the eyes of the insane.

Judge Curtis—Do you notice any restlessness in Mr. Rhinelander's eyes now?

Dr. Douglass—Yes, but he is not even disengaged—I can see the same restlessness I saw before.

Dr. Frederick Oakes, who was at Columbia College with Rhinelander in 1876, said he knew many things peculiar in his actions. He was brilliant in his pencil sketches. Rhinelander was brilliant in mathematical subjects, deficient in classical studies. Judge Curtis drew from the witness the point that mathematics involved to the highest extent the use of the reasoning faculties—more than classics or eloquence.

John Dunn, stable-keeper at Nos. 250 and 257 West Forty-eighth-st., testified as to Rhinelander's eccentric actions, his sudden starts and long spells of quiet. He was always talking about the pedigrees of horses.

Dr. W. L. Hardy, examining physician at the Tombs, testified that Rhinelander told him that Drake had criminal relations with his son, and that he meant to kill him. Rhinelander had said: "I am going to burn you, sink your man, your honor is satisfied." He was convinced of Rhinelander's insanity from his jerky conversation, the disconnected thread of his thoughts, the spasmodic contraction of his limbs. When he became excited his speech was thick. He had said that he was sorry he did not tell Drake at the time when Mr. Rhinelander was occupying his room that he would be a good witness for him. Dr. Hardy considered that was not a wise precaution on Rhinelander's part. He thought Rhinelander's insanity was of a settled form. One indication was in vanity; he "had a very good idea of himself."

Judge Curtis—Have you not seen some very distinguished people entertain that idea—doctors, for instance?

Dr. Hardy—Yes—and lawyers. [Laughs.]

Judge Curtis (p. easily)—I thought you said that; but I wished to get you to say it again.

A question was asked for Rhinelander—"What portion of experts of insanity are insane?" was received with laughter. Dr. Hardy answered:

The theory has been advanced that they become insane by constant association with the insane, but it has never been proved.

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